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Selected Tales.

THE STORY OF FIESCO,
The Conspirator of Genoa.

"How justly am I punished for being such a proud, such a happy bride!" said the gentle Countess of Lavagna to herself. "How deeply did I feel the triumph, which I did not show, when Fiesco was mine—when the dream was realised, the sweet and dazzling dream, that Fiesco loved me! Alas, I have loved him too well! I have only felt my existence in his presence; and now I had but just begun to lose the awe which mingled with my love for him—to lose the timid, trembling awe of a girl's love, in all a wife's fond, free affection.—Yet all my happiness seems breaking up! Fiesco is changed—wherefore I know not; how, I can scarcely tell; only this poor heart feels the change. Only feels it, did I say! do I not know it? for he is not here. Where is your master?" said the young countess, turning suddenly to her nurse, who at that instant entered the room; "has not my lord returned?"

"Ah, no, sweet one!" replied the old and loving nurse; "that is, he is not now at home. He came in soon after yourself, but only to change his dress for gay and masquerading garments, and went out unattended, even by a single lacquey."

"And left no message for me? How could you see him depart without using the privilege which my love has given you? Dear nurse, had not your woman's wit a word to keep him?"

"I made bold to speak to him," she answered; "to ask him when he would return—what message he would leave me. He stared at me, as if his thoughts were wandering, at first; but at the repeated mention of your name, a soft and gracious smile came like light over his countenance, and he bade me bear a thousand loves to his dear mistress."

"But his return!—spake he not of his return nurse."

"No, sweet one! not a word did he say. I would have asked again, but he was gone while the words were on my lips."

"Well, nurse, good night."

"Good night! Why, my own child, you are not undressed yet! Shall I send your maidens to you?—or, let me stay to-night; for you seem sad and thoughtful, and might not please to bear the gaze of young and careless eyes."

"Dear nurse, good night! I need no help at present; I shall not go to rest just yet; indeed, I could not rest. Take hence these glittering baubles—on this aching bosom they hang too heavily. Untwist these jewels from my hair. Why am I thus bedizened, unless in mockery of an aching heart! Nurse, dear nurse, how kind you are! 'Tis sweet to rest my head upon your bosom—it has been often laid there."

"What is the matter, darling!" said the nurse, looking down fondly on the soft downcast eyes of her beloved lady, and smoothing her beautiful hair on her brow with her wrinkled hand. Leonora did not answer just at first; but when she did reply, she gently raised her head, and said, almost playfully.

"Perhaps, dear nurse, I can scarcely tell myself, what I have to complain of; and, if so, I am sure I ought not trouble others with my fancies." The old nurse was discreet enough to see that her mistress did not wish to be questioned.

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Long before the hour of matins the Countess of Lavagna entered the ancient church where she was accustomed to perform her devotions. An attendant followed her, bearing a basket of orange blossoms and white roses. They passed onward through the long and dusky aisles to a little vaulted chapel. The gentle lady knelt for a few minutes before the altar, and then filled the silver vases with her fresh and snowy flowers. As her attendant quitted the chapel, she turned to an old monument that stood at the farthest end. It was the monument of a former Count of Lavagna, a brave and gentle warrior, who had been killed in battle a short time after his marriage. The figure of the young nobleman, carved in white marble, lay upon the tomb. His young widow had erected the monument not long before her death, for she had died within the year of her widowhood; and her own tomb had been erected at the foot of her husband's.

"I was wont to pity thee," said Leonora. I was wont to come hither, and feel that I could have mourned with thee, young and melancholy lady; deprived so soon of thy dearest earthly treasure; but now I almost envy such a lot. 'Tis better to mourn the high-minded honorable dead, than to bewail, as I now do, the lost honor of the living. I almost wish this aching heart of mine was freed from the wretched vanities of the unsatisfying world."

For a little while the gentle lady stood in deep thought, leaning upon the marble monument of the young and widowed Countess of Lavagna; then she remembered that it was not merely to bewail her own troubles that she had entered the sacred edifice; but to confess that she herself was weak and sinful, and to pray for patience to bear the trials of her lot, and faith to walk meekly and resignedly with her God. She rose up from her quiet prayers refreshed and comforted in spirit. Nay, she left the church deeply impressed with the sinfulness of murmuring at any trial she might be called upon to endure; for her eye fell upon an old painting of the Man of Sorrows, standing in the midst of cruel mockers in the purple robe, with the crown of thorns on his head, and the reed in his hand. Underneath the picture was written, "He pleased not himself." — Those words conveyed to the heart of Leonora the lesson she felt it necessary to learn, and to learn at once.

The door of Fiesco's own apartment was partly open. Leonora, as she passed by, pushed it a little farther open, and said playfully and gently.

"May I come in?"

No answer was returned, and, peeping into the apartment, she repeated her question. Fiesco had thrown himself back on the couch where he had been sitting, and was fast asleep. Lightly and cautiously she stole across the room, and bending down over him she 'issed his forehead.—Still Fiesco did not wake; he was too wearied to feel so slight a disturbance as the gentle voice, and the light foot-fall, and the soft lips of Leonora. She sat down opposite her husband, to wait quietly his waking; and, as her full gaze rested on his countenance, she thought within herself, "can this be the most thoughtless witling in Genoa? Can that broad, thoughtful brow, those deep-set eyes, those lips so closely shut, and so expressive of decision and firmness, can they be the expressive features of Fiesco's real character? Is it possible that such a man should be given up to frivolous and wanton pleasures?"—Just then, a frown knit the brow of the sleeper, and his lips and nostrills were slightly curled with an indignant and haughty scorn. He struck his firmly closed hand upon the open pages of a book that lay upon the couch beside him, and a few muttered words escaped from his lips. The book fell, and as Leonora stooped to pick it up, the title met her eye.

"You have been reading the Orations of Cicero," said she, as Fiesco awoke, offering him the volume as she spoke.

"Have I?" he said, carelessly taking the book, but appearing a little confused.—"You mean, my Leonora, that I have not been able to keep awake over this dull volume."

Leonora Cibo had become the wife of Giovanni Ludovico Fiesco, Count of Lavagna, soon after he came into possession of his paternal inheritance. His family was of the oldest and most noble among the families of Genoa La Superba, as that city of beautiful palaces has long been named. Not long after his marriage, to the astonishment of all, Fiesco became an altered being. The quiet manliness, the deep reserved thoughtfulness of his character, left him suddenly. He became, to all appearance, madly devoted to the pleasures and follies of the most profligate society in Genoa. Some thought he was an infatuated gambler; others looked upon him as the dupe of some shameless woman; and his name was coupled with the names of many ladies high in rank, but light and wanton in their demeanor. Some few, and those utter strangers to the gentle, lovely Leonora, expressed their fears that he was disappointed and wretched in his marriage, and that the wife of his choice made his home unhappy. Leonora herself, said nothing, made no complaint, bore every indignity with an undisturbed sweetness; but she became meekly and quietly sad, though she smiled and spoke as usual.

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"Will you not stay beside me a little while, my Fiesco?" said Leonora, as, leaning on his arm, they ascended the marble staircase of the Doria Palace. "'Tis to please you that I come, and yet we are as strangers to one another, whenever we appear together. Do I tease you, my beloved husband?" she continued, observing that Fiesco's was turned away. "Do I tease you?" Forgive me if I do, and I will be silent."

Fiesco had not heard her first question; but he recovered, with a smile, from his deep abstraction. "Tease me! You charm, you delight me at all times."

As he spoke the doors of the splendid saloon were thrown open by the servants who attended them; and in a minute Fiesco was by the side of a beautiful woman, and one distinguished for her boldness and levity, though exquisitely beautiful and of high rank.

Leonora herself was soon annoyed by the familiar and offensive attentions of Giannetino Doria, the nephew of the venerable Andrea Doria, then the first man in Genoa. Giannetino was an ill-educated, vulgar-minded fellow, long the sworn enemy of the Count Fiesco; but now, to the astonishment of every one, his friend and intimate associate. This Giannetino did not attempt to conceal his admiration of the lovely Countess of Lavagna.—Deeply pained and disgusted with his insolent familiarities, the chaste and modest Leonora could not help turning her eyes once or twice, almost unconsciously, towards her husband. She saw the gaze of his dark proud eye fixed for a moment full and sternly on Giannetino, but only for a moment; the most calm and careless smiles succeeded.

"Dear husband," she said to Fiesco, when she was alone with him afterwards, "how could you leave me so the whole evening? I cannot expose myself again, indeed I cannot, to such attentions from Giannetino Doria. Are you not indignant at his insolence?"

"Am I not rather charmed at his exquisite taste?" replied Fiesco, smiling.

"At any rate, Fiesco," said Leonora, "I shall take care not to put myself in the way of such insulting familiarities again."

"Really," said Fiesco, "you judge poor Giannetino a little hardly. I find little to complain of about him."

"Is that your true opinion, my Fiesco?"

He started at her a moment, then drawing her gently towards him, he playfully twined a long ringlet of her luxuriant hair around his fingers, and kissed the downcast lids of her modest eyes, now swelled with tears.

"Yes, yes!" he answered, "it is my true opinion, sweetest wife, but why do you weep?" for now her tears fell fast.

"For the simplest reason, my Fiesco," she replied, fixing her eyes with an appealing look upon his countenance; "I weep because I am unhappy. My heart is full of grief whenever I behold my husband, the first, the noblest mind in Genoa, as I have this night beheld him. I must speak, if only to remind you of talents, of no common order, that you seem to have forgotten, of your station in this our beloved Genoa. Does not the state demand your services? Do you not live as if you had forgotten all this, my husband?"

"My fair and eloquen monitor," replied Fiesco, archly coaxingly, "are these the subjects fit for ladies' lips?"

"No, not for ladies' lips, but for your lips, your mind, your heart, Fiesco."

"It must be very late; 'tis long past midnight," remarked Fiesco, his countenance and manner expressing only careless unconcern. "We must to rest, my Leonora. I will send your woman to you as I go to my dressing room. You are pale with much fatigue."

"Not with fatigue, Fiesco," she said, sighing deeply as she spoke; but he was gone, and her words, if not unheard were quite undecded.

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"I scarcely thought to see you here," said Paolo Pansa, (he was sitting in the library of the Lavagna Palace,) "but I am glad to see you, Count Fiesco. I have been wishing to tell you that your levity has not made me your dupe. Those very smiles upon that face of yours, are as out of place as the gaudy weeds in which your limbs are fancifully clad. Do I not know that, even from a youth, your countenance has ever worn a grave, deep thoughtfulness? Young as you are the lines of thought are deeply graven there. You never studied aught in attire but a manly simplicity. Why is the eagle in the peacock's plumage?"

"Perhaps," said Fiesco, carelessly, "I am as others have often been before me; as many a dull and mopish boy has become when he has escaped from his tutor, and left off pouring over books. Perhaps I am tired, heartily tired of your lessons, with all due deference to yourself, my dear and honored tutor. Forgive my yawning; but the sight of you brings to my remembrance the old worn-out story of freedom, and the public voice, and the rights of free-born men. Pshaw! it makes me sick! I was once like you, mos. honored sir!—a lover of the fabled follies of old Rome. I have done dreaming and doating about heroes: Leonidas, the Spartan; Themistocles, of Athens; and Tully, your favorite, the sweet and forceful orator of Rome; or the stern Cato, which is worshipped now. What are you reading? Ha! the Life of Socrates: 'tis rather fine."

Pansa closed the book, and looking Fiesco in the face, not sternly, but very calmly and searchingly, said: "I remember, among the fables of old Rome, Fiesco, the story of a deep and crafty fellow, who played the fool till he persuaded all men he was witless, and then burst forth among them like a fire-brand. His name was —— What! you have forgotten, or care not to remember. Am I to interpret that upraised eyebrow, and that smile of unconcern, into such language? Well, well, 'tis an old story that you have studied to some purpose, Count of Lavagna; names, we know, are nothing, but the plot of Brutus has not been forgotten with his name. Nay, nay, do not look offended.—If you wish your secret to be safe, tell me to be silent; but do not think to dupe me. Do not mistake your friend; I ask no confidence. I wish to know nothing that you would not freely tell me, quite unmasked; but, my friend, (my child, I had almost said,) can you seriously imagine that I am to be deceived like the crowd? I who have known and studied you so long? I who have watched over you since your early childhood? There *is* a secret, is there not?"

"There may be, and there may not be," replied Fiesco, rather haughtily.

"That is," said Pansa, "you own the fact, but do not choose to take me into your counsels."

"I did not say so," replied Fiesco; "but ——" and he hesitated.

"Nay, my friend," exclaimed Pansa, "you need not hesitate as if you thought it right to weigh well the advantages of making me a confidant or not. I tell you plainly that I should decidedly refuse that confidence, if it were tendered. I wish for an answer to one question, and I have done. I expect your fiery spirit will take it as an insult; but for that I care not.—Are you seeking any selfish end? Answer me this question."

"I had struck down almost any man at such a question," said the Count of Lavagna; "but to you I answer at once: I have no selfish end in view, but one as grand and glorious as an ancient Roman's."

"I will not doubt your word, my son; but beware, lest in this secret plot of your's in which you evidently make so many dupes—beware, lest you are making your self the greatest. You know I always had a rough, blunt way of speaking; and, therefore, you may bear with me while I tell you that I like not your affected friendship with Giannetino Doria, a man you hate. I saw you arm and arm with him a few days since. I saw you coming with him from the Doria Palace this very morning. I saw you take his children, his motherless children, in your arms, as if you loved them. There may be policy in this, and many other ways of your's that I have lately noted; but there is a lack of honesty that I cannot tolerate."

"Stop, stop, I entreat you," exclaimed Fiesco, in a voice scarcely louder than a whisper, his cheek becoming of ashy paleness, and his eyes glaring in their deep snow-white hairs. "I shall go mad, if you continue speaking such stabbling words."

"There's no occasion for all this violence, boy. No, no, not boy," said Pansa, checking himself, and looking with affection on his pupil. "I meant not to insult or hurt you. Not boy; except in one sense, except when I address you as my son; for as my son I ever must regard you."

A servant entered here, announcing to his master that the Signors Verrina and Calogno were waiting below.

"I will see them presently," said Fiesco.

"And as I," said Pansa, "wish to see one nor the other, (for, to tell the truth, I have no opinion of them,) I shall take my leave. This door will lead me, will it not, Fiesco, to the apartments of your wife, the loveliest and the sweetest gentlewoman that I have ever known."

"Leonora always sees you with delight," said Fiesco, throwning open the door for Pansa; "and you will find her in her favorite room, or on the terrace, looking towards the sea."

"Those children!" said Fiesco to himself, when left alone; "he touched me there. I felt a villain when I kissed those children! A woman passed and said, "That man's a father;" and Giannetino, whom I hate, smiled with such fond, paternal love, that all my hatred turned, for a moment, back upon myself. I felt myself no father, but a low, treacherous villian. If ever the great enemy of man entered my heart, it was when I kissed those children."

For many minutes he walked up and down the library, deep in thought, and he managed in those minutes to find arguments and excuses enough to satisfy himself. "I am justified," he said, "thoroughly, certainly justified, in using any means for such an end! Caliogno, Verrina, my good friends, you are most welcome!"

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"Your fete will be magnificent to-night, lady," said Paolo Panso, as, many days afterwards, he entered the apartment where the Countess Lavagna was sitting.

"My fete!" replied the lady, looking up with a stare of astonishment: "I never had less idea of a fete, or felt less inclined for one, than on this evening. I have been reading, in this my favorite saloon, with no sound but the light splashing of that little fountain in my ears. Open the lattices, Bianca; since the sun has left us, the light breeze may enter at its own sweet will. Shall we remain here, by the margain of the fountain, or shall we go into this open corridor, and sit down among the jasmines and orange trees? My fete will be magnificent indeed!" she said, and smiled. "See how the large and full-orbed moon is rising! Out of the very waves, she seems to come like a rich golden urn of light; and now she pours her lustre back into the sea, and heaves a quivering and lengthening line of light, as she glides upwards, brightening as she rises. Thousands of stars are sparkling overhead, and the deep azure dome, that rising moon, the glittering stars—these are the splendors of my fete."

"I did not like to interrupt you, sweet lady, in your description of such splendors as I would have you love, for they are splendors fresh from the hand of our high and great Creator; but tell me, did you not expect me!"

"I always welcome you with much delight," replied the lady.

"Still you did not expect me?"

"I am the more pleased to see you."

"But you knew not of my coming?"

"Well, then, I did not," said Leonora, "if you will have me answer bluntly."

"I have a billet, lady, from the Count, your husband, inviting me to meet his gentle wife and himself; and I was about to blame you for bidding me to such a crowded entertainment, when I find you almost as unconscious as myself of the preparations going on below."

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"Have my orders been obeyed?—are none permitted to go forth?—have any offered to do so?—are the guests many?"

These questions were asked, in a hurried voice, by one who stood at the entrance-gate of the Lavagna Palace, muffled up in a large dark mantle. The porter knew his master's voice, and answered with low and rapid words; but the Count Fiesco stopped not to hear them: he had hastened onward into the Palace with a band of armed men, that passed through the gates as he stood speaking to the porter.

In less than half an hour he was again before the Palace gates. "How many have entered now?" exclaimed Fiesco. "It is well!" he replied, as the number was told him; and springing foward, he flung to, with his own hands, the massy gates, and drew the bolts, and summoned, at the moment, a close guard of soldiers. "Let no one pass," he cried. "Keep fast the gates; they open not but at my order."

"And now, my guests!—my friends!—my noble gentlemen!" said the Count Fiesco—he had entered the great banqueting hall by a small door at the upper end—"there is scarce time for particular salutations; but I must address you all as a most courteous host. You stare about you with astonishment, finding no banquet spread, but on all sides armed men. Still, the welcome that I give you is a more honest, hearty welcome, than ever silken lordling gave at his most gorgeous feast. You have known me, latterly, as a fool, a profligate, a most contemptible and senseless fellow! The time is come when I must throw off this mean disguise. I do so as entirely as I fling off this clogging mantle." He threw off the mantle as he spoke, and stood before them, clad from head to foot in close and glittering armor, every limb and his whole body covered, all but his graceful throat and head, and they were bare. "The time is come," he exclaimed, "and Genoa must be freed from the tyranny of certain of her nobles. Behold the fete to which I have invited you! That dolt, Giannetino Doria, would fain be master of this Genoa—of our free and beautiful Genoa. I have written proofs of his intrigues and treacheries, and at the proper season you shall see them. He feels, and he has cause to do so, that I will never submit to his insolent ambition. He would willingly get me out of his way; and he has sought to do so. He has tried poison and the assassin's dagger, but in vain; for I am here to lead you to the downfall of his whole faction, and himself among them. Be free, and follow me. I go to raise our lost Republic from its ashes, to build up again the noble edifice in strength and glory: the blood of Doria will cement it well. My plans are well and deeply laid; and believe me, I know not what it is to fear on this occasion. My friends, I love and honor you. I would make you my comrades in this grand design. I have three hundred armed soldiers within these very walls. My well-manned fleet is floating in the harbor. The guards, both at the Palace and in the Port, are in my interest. Fifteen hundred of our poor mechanics watch for my signal to fly to arms. Two thousand of my vassals, and two thousand soldiers, furnished by the Duke of Piacentia, are at this moment entering the city, and all this has been done with the most perfect secrecy. Not the slightest suspicion of my proceedings has got wind as yet: I have foreseen and obviated every risk, though many a perilous risk have I encountered. But the glory, my brethern, the glory, that will this day be mine, it must be shared by you."

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Fiesco hastened to the apartment of his wife. Leonora sprang forward to meet him.

"I am half fearful," she said, "and half bewildered. Not an hour since they brought me word that many guests had arrived, in most superb attire, to a fete; a fete and banquet in this very mansion.—Our friend," she added, turning to Pansa, "received an invitation to pass a quiet evening, with my beloved husband and myself. I have not known, my Fiesco, what I should do to please you, the wish to please you being my highest object.—The nurse came bustling in, not long ago, affronted that I had not told her of our festivities; then wondering at the plainness of my dress, and bidding me attire myself at once. I sent her to my dressing-room, to please her, with orders that my jewels and rich dresses should be laid out in readiness. Others of my women came, soon after, saying the courts below were full of armed men. I sent one back, bidding her seek thee, and request thy presence; but she returned at once, and told me we were prisoners, in this, my range of chambers, the great door at the stair case foot having been locked since she had passed it last. We sat down therefore, to wait in patience, till we knew your pleasure, but you are come, Fiesco, my dear lord! and you will let me hear from your dear lips, some reason of this mystery. Is there a fete!—some masque, perhaps, intended as a pleasant surprise for me, kindly intended, though I take no pleasure in such poor shows. Is this your masquing suit to-night?" she said, and smiled, as the gleam of his armor met her eye, beneath his loose mantle. "Fiesco, my Fiesco, you do not smile, and now I bethink me of those armed soldiers. Say, is there danger to thy person? Are they come to seize thee for some offence thou never hast committed? Has word or look of thine been construed as an insult against that ancient foe to thee, that would-be tyrant, Giannetina Doria? Speak, for suspense creates a thousand fancies, that you may smile at, but they make me wretched."

Fiesco had stood gravely silent while his wife addressed him: his countenance was grave and full of thought, and his attention seemed all fixed on her; but every now and then his restless eye glanced on his friend and former tutor, Paola Pansa. As he entered, he placed a written paper in the hand of Pansa, and when the latter had perused it and came forward, Fiesco said:

"One word will do; you promise not to leave her, you promise to attend to all I ask?"

"I do, I do." said Panza, slowly and thoughtfully, and then added, even more deliberately, "I promise most faithfully; but—"

"I have no time, not a moment, for remonstrances, you have promised, I ask no more. And now my Leonora, my noble, lovely, injured Leonora! Injured, for I have wronged you by appearing what I was not, and what you could not love: hear me" he said with a look of tenderness, and a voice of winning sweetness, that contrasted strangely with the stern clank and glitter of his armor, (for he had now thrown off his mantle for the last time;) a naked sword was in his hand, for which he wore no scabbard, and daggers in his girdle. "Hear me, my noble wife; you see me as I am, as I have ever been, under my witling's garb. You see fulfilling your own wishes, fired with a noble ardor for great deeds, determined to avenge great wrongs. Hear me when I declare that I have ever loved you above myself, and second only to mine honor.—I have loved the print of your small footsteps in the common dust, before the brightest glances of those eyes you thought I basked in. Your words of censure, had they been unkind, (and they were never yet unkind,) would have been sweeter to my ears than the best praises of an angel's tongue. I have now no time for explanations, my sweet Leonora. Fear not for my safety—fear nothing. After one little hour I shall return."

He took her hand, and pressed it to his lips. He gently drew her towards him with one long fervent kiss. Leonora, could not speak; her whole countenance was changed; her whole frame trembled with a strong hysteric agitation. Her lips unclosed, as if to speak: and still she did not speak. Gently and pityingly her husband led her to his friend.

"With you, my honored friend, I leave this treasure, above all price," he said in faltering accents.

"Wait, wait a moment," cried the distracted lady; "all you tell me perplexes me, confounds me. Why this haste?—Sit down, my husband, and let me sit beside thee, and let me hear enough to calm my terror; to stop the throbbings of this heart; that feels as if it would burst my bosom. Stop a little while, not to gratify aught like a woman's idle curiosity, only in pity stop, in greatest pity!"

Fiesco took the little trembling hands that were so pityingly extended to him in his own. "All depends," he said, "on doing what is to be done at once; there is no danger but in loss of time. I must not wait to tell you more than this. Within an hour; the influence, the tyranny of the Dorias, will have ceased forever. Within an hour Genoa will be free. Within an hour, when I take this hand, 'twill be to hail thee, not as the lovliest only, but the first lady in Genoa, the Magnificent. No no, look not so sad, and so affrighted still. There is no danger to your husband, lady, but in delay and trifling in your chamber. My tarrying here perils my life, for I am losing time. My going forth guards me, preserves me, assures me of the triumph almost in my grasp."

"It may be true," replied the lady, wiping away the tears that fell fast over her palid face; "it may be true, but I am certain there's to be blood-shedding within this hour, Fiesco. The good old Andrea Doria, is to die, and Giannetino, with all his sins full blown and unrepented of, he's to be sent to his great dread account: they must be both murdered; murdered by treachery, in the silent night. I know that this must happen, and I know not where the dreadful carnage is to end. 'Tis easy to talk of one short hour. It is just as easy to throw a spark into a magazine of gunpowder, and say only a barrel or two shall explode there."

"Sweet Leonora," replied Fiesco, "you are talking as women sometimes will, of what they know nought."

"Must there not be bloodshedding to-night?" she said: "that's all I ask."

"I am already detained too long," he said with some impatience.

"If you go," she cried, "promise me you will not murder them."

"If I go not at once," he answered, "Genoa will be bound in double fetters, and I shall be murdered at your very feet!"

"My Fiesco, my own Fiesco," cried Leonora, tenderly clasping his arm, but shrinking away, when the hard cold armor met her hand: "anything is better than the cold-blooded murder of those men."

"Leonora, I entreat, I command you to be silent, and let me go. You, yourself, have oftentimes reproached me with my inglorious life of late. You have often urged me to avenge the honor of this, our Genoa."

"To preserve, but never to avenge it, unkind Fiesco. Openly and manfully to preserve the freedom and honor of the state."

"Silence," he cried, "we have had enough of this!"

Leonora fell at his feet, and again entreated him to hear her; but now Fiesco was almost furious, roughly he tore himself away, and with a deep stern voice, commanded her to speak no more; yet as he was striding from the chamber, he turned his head to take a last look at her he loved so well. She was kneeling where he had left her, her hands clasped, her neck, expressive eyes fixed with a look of anguish on the ground, he stopped and gazed tenderly upon her, "Forgive my brutal roughness, gentle love," he exclaimed.

"One moment, only one moment!" she exclaimed, with a trembling voice: "take leave of me, Fiesco. We shall not meet again. Take me to your bosom, and kiss me for the last, last time." She rose up, for Fiesco came towards her. Tenderly he took her in his arms, her head sunk on his shoulder, and once he pressed her lips to his bare throat; but when he raised her there was no breath upon her pallid lips; her eyes were closed, her graceful arms hung lifeless. Leonora did not recover from that long and death-like swoon till the whole Palace was shut up, and quiet as the grave.

The plans of Fiesco had all been made with admirable skill and foresight; every precaution had been taken, every contingency prepared for. In every quarter the most complete success attended his conspiracy. Giannetino was slain at the onset; but the loved and venerable Andrea Doria, though old and feeble, was carried in safety, by his own faithful domestics, to Masona, a country seat, about fifteen miles from Genoa. Every quarter of the city was now suddenly in motion, and men of all ranks rose up to terror and dismay.—But while to one party, everything wore the aspect of one inextricable confusion, in which the only wise and safe way was to submit to the other, to Fiesco and the rest of his conspirators, to whom he had given orders, at once the most minute and the most decided, all was one clear, well-organized, well-worknig plot.

It is a remarkable fact, that in this celebrated conspiracy, every one had been thought of but the One All-wise Disposer, of all human events. Everything had been foreseen but the interference of his wise providence. Fiesco, with all his consummate skill and policy, had probably for-not attended with the blessing of God.—Perhaps he felt that there was too much of selfishness, and too much of down-right crime, in his well laid and executed plot, for God to tolerate, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

It sometimes pleases that often-forgotten, often insulted Being, to disconsert, in a very quiet and simple way, all the skillful arrangements of earthly policy.

The dauntless head and chief of this extraordinary conspiracy was already triumphant. His every plan was crowned with wonderful success. His lofty form was seen, his voice was heard in every quarter. He shouted Liberty! and the cry spread like a blazing wild-fire on all sides. Not liberty alone, but Fiesco and Liberty, became the cry. Fiesco was seen running to the Port, and as he ran, shouting liberty. The galley slaves awakened by the cry, and repeated it; and Fiesco seems to have feared lest those convicts should burst their chains and escape. There was a little plank leading from the shore to the galleys. It is supposed that Fiesco's foot slipped in passing along this plank; nothing more was known with certainty. The inquiry, however, at length began to be made—"Where is Fiesco?" The conspirators waitsd his further orders.—The Senate, who had assembled at the Palace, waited to hear his terms and even to submit to them. His presence was required and waited for everywhere, but he appeared not. As the truth broke upon them, the people began to lose their ardor in furthering the conspiracy. That one false step changed the aspect of the whole affair. It was not till the fourth day after the breaking out of the conspiracy, that the body or Fiesco was found. His last mortal agonies had met no human eye, his last cries had not been heard. Clogged and forced down by the weight of his heavy armor, he had been drowned.

It was not long after the death of the young and gallant Count of Lavagna, that an aged man entered the church of ——, in haste. His countenance was troubled, and he was clad in mourning habiliments. As he passed along the beautiful but gloomy aisles, he looked from side to side with anxious eyes, as if in search of some one he had lost. He went towards the chapel of the Lavagna family, but came back unsatisfied. At last he stopped. A slight and girlish figure, in the deepest mourning, was kneeling on the pavement in a dark corner of the ancient church; her pale hands were clasped, her eyes timidly raised, and her lips moved in humble prayer. The aged man knelt down, but at some distance, as if fearing to disturb her; and when at length she rose, then he came forward. She turned to greet him, not with smiles, but with a calm and melancholy sweetness, more pleasing than any smiles. She thanked him for his kind anxiety about her; then, gently pointing to an old picture, she said:

"The painting and the words are nothing; but I have been praying that their lesson may be taught me by the Spirit, and for His blessed sake, my Father, 'He pleased not himself!'"